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Abstract Title: Elderly Drivers: An Increasing Threat on Florida Roadways

Abstract: In 2003, there were 19.9 million licensed drivers age 65 years and older in the United States, 1.9 million in the State of Florida. The number of motor vehicle fatalities is growing among this age group. The objective of the present study was to utilize epidemiologic surveillance systems to recommend improving elderly driver license renewal laws in the State of Florida. LexisNexis academic is a subscription-based full-text index service utilized for legal research of state driving laws. The Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) operated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration provides yearly comprehensive motor vehicle fatality data for all the 50 United States. A comparison and analysis of US elderly driver license renewal laws, particularly for the State of Florida were undertaken. Analyses via cross tabulation of mortality data and individual age (65 and over) in the State of Florida were conducted. These analyses revealed that in the US from 1994 to 2003 the incidence of motor vehicle fatality among elderly drivers is increasing by 0.31% per year. In the State of Florida, for the same period, the rate of elderly driver fatalities is increasing by 0.42% per year. Florida has one of the least restrictive driver license renewal laws as compared to other states. Given the expected growth of the aging US population and the increase in mortality rate associated with elder drivers, stricter driver license renewal laws are paramount in Florida, thus approaching local, county and state representatives to improve the safety of Florida highways is highly warranted.